

The True Story of Tonopah By the Editor of the Bonanza

The true story of the finding of Tonopah has appeared in a variety of forms, but the Bonanza of June 15, 1901, tells the circumstances without the least attempt at embellishment, and at a time when all the facts were fresh in the minds of the chief actors in this drama of the desert. The story follows:

J. L. Butler, the discoverer of the Tonopah Mining district, that is now attracting universal attention in mining circles, is an old resident of Nye and Eureka counties, and has been more or less identified with prospecting since 1870. Like all others who followed the hills in search of nature's hidden wealth, his pathway has not been strewn with roses, neither did Dame Fortune smile on him benignly and drop riches into his lap, except in his latest and greatest discovery. Notwithstanding the hardships and disappointments through which he has passed, he had a presentiment that sometime he would become the owner of valuable mining property. For the last ten or fifteen years he labored under the impression that the country in the vicinity of Tonopah mountain was worthy of investigation, and though many excursions were planned with this object in view, something invariably transpired to turn him from this purpose, until May, just one year ago, he determined to make the trip, and on the 19th of that month passed over the ground now made famous by his fortunate discovery.

Camping at what is known as the Warren Averel spring on the 19th, about three miles of the present town of Tonopah, he directed his course towards the Porphyry mountains, also christened as Tonopah, and finding float scattered promiscuously over the flat, immediately commenced prospecting for its source. The nature of the formation is soft, consequently erosion has been very great, but the quartz being extremely hard, has resisted the action of the elements and, so far as the ledges are concerned, oxidation has not been radical. Hence the veins crop out prominently above the country rock.

The croppings were of such magnitude and the surface quartz of such peculiar cast that he was not favorably prepossessed with the general outlook, but concluded, however, to take a few samples and have them tested. These samples were sent to T. L. Oddie at Belmont, by whom they were forwarded to Walter Gayhart at Austin, Nev., for treatment. The returns were promptly received by Mr. Oddie, but it was several weeks before he met Mr. Butler and apprised him of their value. The results exceeded by far his fondest expectations and created great excitement among those who were made aware of the richness of the ore. These tests gave a return of 540 ounces in silver and \$206 in gold. Fabulous though these values were, Mr. Butler was still unenthusiastic, and desired other corroborative evidence, and, through the instrumentality of Wilkes Brougher, the samples that were sent to Frank Higgs at Klondike for him to test, but were misplaced and forgotten, were traced up, and yielded 395 ounces in silver and \$152 in gold.

Knowing that it would require money to perform the requisite amount of labor under the state law, and also for recording, he debated the feasibility of the proposition before he assured himself that the undertaking was possible. At this time he was holding an office in Nye county and his duties in this respect, coupled with the attention he was compelled to pay his ranch, he did not return to the field of his discovery until August. Mrs. Butler accompanied her husband this trip and, under her persuasion, and influenced by extraordinary assays, Mr. Butler took much deeper interest in the matter and immediately began the work of locating.

The Desert Queen was the first location made and recorded in Mr. J. L. Butler's name. The Burro followed in T. L. Oddie's name; Mrs. Butler located the Mizpah, one of the richest properties in the group, so far, at least, as development has progressed. The Buckboard was the next location, made in R. C. Chrysler's name, to be followed by the Red Plume and Sand Grass by J. L. Butler. All these locations were made on the first day, all being in close proximity, and the identity of the ledge was easily discovered.

The next day Mrs. Butler found the mammoth outcroppings of the Valley View, appearing from five to seven feet above the surface and about thirty feet in width. At a casual glance they concluded it was

of no great value, but upon breaking the ore and finding it strikingly similar to the ore from which great value had been returned, it was accordingly staked off, and subsequent work demonstrated it to be one of the most important, with the exception of the Mizpah, in the entire group. The ground was carefully searched for the presence of other veins, but, becoming satisfied that the locations made embraced the entire croppings of the mineral zone, Mr. and Mrs. Butler departed for Belmont, taking seventy-five samples from the different ledges with them for treatment. No further action was taken until October 8, 1900, when Mr. Butler, accompanied by W. Brougher and T. L. Oddie, both of Belmont, returned to the field and began the extraction of ore. News of the great strike spread rapidly and prospectors and miners, ever on the alert for new fields with which to ply their vocation, soon sought the new Eldorado, and Mr. Butler and those interested with him, concluding the work they would be compelled to perform was greater than they could carry out at that time, conceived the idea of leasing the ledges in parcels of 100 feet along the vein and, by so doing, not only get the various locations prospect, but obtain substantial financial benefits also. This was a judicious move for all concerned, as it gave ready and lucrative employment to those coming to the camp in search of opportunities, and also lessened the burden that would naturally have fallen on the mine owners. The steady stream of phenomenally high-grade ore that is and has been leaving Tonopah for reduction demonstrates more conclusively than any language could predict how faithfully the leasers have performed their tasks, and is also an indisputable affirmation of the extraordinary values that follow the ledges.

The mines as they now stand are owned jointly by J. L. Butler, W. Brougher, T. L. Oddie, W. C. Gayhart and B. F. Higgs. Mr. Butler represents five parts and the remainder three.

Many representative men have visited and carefully investigated the camp with a view to purchasing the properties, but satisfactory terms could not be arranged and hence all negotiations thus far have failed. After the last futile effort to consummate a transfer the company, with one accord, decided to withdraw the mines from market and grant more liberal concessions to the leasers in regard to time and, by so doing, encourage deeper developments.

Prior to this new and more ad-

vantageous arrangement the leases were revocable upon its sale, and under such conditions those leasing would confine their labors to values within easy reach, and no effort was made to prove the downward course of the ore shoots, or the existence of heavier bodies down in the earth. A different proposition is now presented and those who are operating will, as fast as the surface values are exhausted, block out stopping ground much deeper and, though it will take time, depth will be gradually attained and the theory of connecting the existence of heavy ore bodies deep in the ground, fully determined, either pro or con.

The mineral belt thus far exposed is one mile wide from its extreme northern to its extreme southern limits, and for this distance is a complete stratification of rich ledges. * * * Mr. Butler has been generous to a fault in all his dealings with those whom he is connected and enjoys the esteem and honest friendship of every one. His word is his bond and, no matter what may transpire in the future history of Tonopah mines, every leaser will be protected if Jim Butler lives. Mrs. Butler is a cosmopolitan lady, very much like her husband, and it can be safely said, without flattery, that she is endowed with sound business ideas and a tact in the administration of affairs connected with the mine that does not usually manifest itself in woman. She is perfectly familiar with the ore here and can tell in an instant if it is good or not. She takes a deep interest in mining and can be seen almost every day visiting the different workings and noting the progress.

If these properties were fully equipped and adequate reduction works erected it is safe to say the bullion product of Tonopah would surprise the mining world. The time will come when this will be done and, perhaps, much sooner than many anticipate. No legal controversy will ever arise over these properties, for Mr. Butler's title to them is as clear as a cloudless sky. Many promising camps have been held in abeyance for years through legal squabbles, but Tonopah will be an exception, as no one on earth could attack Jim Butler's title.

A brass pin, with 45 letters engraved upon the head of it, will be exhibited during Christmas week at one of the big department stores in Sixth avenue, New York.

Certificates of location on sale at the Bonanza office.

PIONEER CONSOLIDATED MILL MAKING A GOOD SHOWING

The Pioneer Consolidated Mining company, a corporation promoted by Denver men, shows what may be accomplished by energy, determination and faith. In spite of the most exasperating delays, litigation and other obstacles of a minor nature they finally got down to hard work and the real business of developing a mine and constructing a mill that promises to disclose profits that will repay the stockholders for their trouble and enhance the value of their investment many fold. The company owns eleven patented claims, comprising 150 acres.

The production to date has been between \$450,000 and \$500,000, and since the mill got down to brass tacks it is turning out bullion at the rate of \$12,000 to \$15,000 a month, with every prospect of increasing this as the supply of ore is almost inexhaustible, and as soon as the mill is turned up so the company can realize exactly what is the best treatment for the ore, it is almost certain that the capacity will be increased. The capitalization is \$5,000,000, with \$3,200,000 issued. The officers are: W. J. Tobin, president; R. F. Tobin, vice president; C. J. Clayton, secretary; W. W. Watson and R. G. Hoyt, directors. The first run of ore sent through the mill, just to put it in shape for the more serious business of daily production, netted \$4.20 a ton, but this was a surprise, as the company did not anticipate any results from the lot of rock which was sent through to fill the chinks and crevices. A test run of 500 tons soon followed and this yielded \$10.15 a ton, which may be accepted as the average of the mine, although there is plenty of chance to sweeten the ores by mixing some of the abundant high-grade.

The Pioneer Consolidated Mining company was organized May, 1909, to take over properties held by the Consolidated Bullfrog-Pioneer Gold Mines company, Gold Hills Mining and Milling company, Bullfrog Valley View Mining company and the Ophir de Oro claim. During the current year the Pioneer Consolidated has

expended close to \$400,000 in the development of their mines and construction work of the mill, including the pipe line and water supply.

Under the supervision of J. R. Bryan, mine superintendent, and Homer Williams, mill superintendent, the Pioneer mine and mill are now operating in a very satisfactory manner, having resumed operations on the 2d of the present month, at the time the pipe line was completed that is now furnishing water to the mill. Twenty-two men are employed in all by the Pioneer company. The Conservatory lease, operating a block of ground on the Pioneer estate, has opened up some milling ore, part of which will be treated by the Pioneer mill.

Fred Milliken is now in camp and is about to start development work on the Indiana ground. Prospecting will soon start on the Bancroft, one

of the properties owned by R. F. and W. J. Tobin.

U. H. Heinman and associates are working a lease on the K K claim, adjoining the Pioneer on the southwest. J. D. O'Brien employs seven men on the Yellow Jacket, a short distance north of the Pioneer mine. In all, between forty and fifty men are now working in the district.

Proof of labor blanks for sale at the Bonanza.

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